THE GREAT NATIONAL ROAD

It Was an Object of General Interest for Forty Years, but Is Now Forgotten.

The National Congress Fought Over It a Third of a Century, and Thirty-Two Years Were Spent in Survey and Construction.

To the Editor of the Indianapolis Journal: Please tell us about the National road. When was it built, between what two points, etc.!

To tell much about the National road, or pike, would be to tell considerable of the earlier political history of the United States. To tell the story of its tedious progress, lasting from 1806 to 1838, would involve the history of a contention which began before the Constitution was fairly out of the hands of its authors and continued to the present time, and which, in some phase or aspect, will continue to practically divide the two great political parties, one of which has always and always will administer the affairs of this government. The public men who maintained, for a quarter of a century, that the federal government had no right to make internal improvements within the States for the general interest were the predecessors of those who, in 1860, declared that the United States had no constitutional power to coerce

a State to keep its place in the Union. It can be said that when the federal Constitution was first adopted, and during the administration of Washington, there was but one view expressed regarding internal improvements, which was their necessity; and not only the ample authority, under the Constitution, to construct them, but the imperative duty of the federal government to construct such land and water-ways as were necessary to promote the general interest and aid interstate commerce. Washington never thought of anything else. He it was whose brain planned canals which should connect the Atlantic, and the Ohio river, and the lakes. All his plans and schemes were upon a national basis. He rarely spoke of a State, and never as a subordinate part of the Union. He was a Federalist of Federalists. Hamilton took the same view. So did Madison when he helped form the Constitution, and was in accord with Washington and wrote papers for the Federalist.

DELAYED BY STRICT CONSTRUCTIONISTS. During the last four years of Washington and the first four of John Adams, Jefferson was a statesman of the opposition. No man ever was more auxious for the first place in public affairs. He was not a vain man, but he wanted to mold affairs according to his theories. He was a philosopher as well as a plotter. During the years of Washington and Adame he evolved a political creed diametrically opposed to them. While they, as Federalists, believed in a strong central government, he went to the other extreme, and not only proclaimed the supremacy of the State, but in the resolutions of 1798, which were his, and which he was instrumental in having the Kentucky Legislature adopt, he proclaimed the heresy of the right of the nullification of the laws of the United States by the States-in which were the germs of the more fatal heresy of secession, put to bloody test in 1861. Jefferson was the father of the school of "strict constructionists." They assumed that the United States had no powers except those which were definitely conferred by the people in the Constitution. There was no such thing as an implied power. If it was proposed to baild a post-road into the interior, these strict constructionists turned to the Constitution, and, finding no explicit grant of powers to build "national roads," shook their heads. Every proposition for the federal government to assume the functions of nationality was met with the decree that, as it was not specified in the Constitution, it could not be. In time the strict constructionists gave the Constitution such close interpretation that, if they were right, the chief object in its adoption was to prevent the people of the United States from becoming a nation and of attaining to that "more perfect union." which is, in its preamble, the declared purpose of the Constitution.

So long as the Nation was a fringe of settlements along the Atlantic there was no need for national highways, but the hour that Fentucky became a State and emigrants entered the territory now constituting Ohio and Indiana, such highways were essential to nationality. The people of those regions must have access to the seaboard for traffic and to the seat of national government. Pennsylvania and Maryland could have no special interest in building permanent roadways across their territory for the almost exclusive use of inhabitants west of the Alleghanies. It must be done by the federal government or not done at all. If not done the people west of the mountains would naturally incline to a federative government, which would use the great rivers not only for highways but for a bond of political union. This was what Aaron Burr had in view, and what he would have carried out had not his conspiracy been discovered and broken up by

ORIGIN OF THE ROAD. The matter of a national road from some point on the Potomac to some point on the Ohio seems to have attracted the attention of Congress as early as 1802. All admitted its necessity, but the strict constructionists said that it could not be done without an amendment to the Constitution. Finally, in 1806, Congress appropriated \$30,000 to make a survey of a road from Cumberland, on the Potomac river in Maryland, to some point on the Ohio river. The government needed the road, and the people needed it more. Across the mountains, Wheeling, on the Ohio, was more distant in time from Washington than is San Francisco now, while the cost of transporting a ton of freight from Baltimore to the Ohio river was greater than it now is from New York to San Francisco. Before much of a practical nature had been done the war of 1812 came to engross public attention and to absorb all the energies of the federal gov-ernment. When that conflict was over public attention was again called to the National road. The people in the interior were more numerous and more clamorous. In the war they had not only been loyal to the federal cause, but they had furnished troops and fought battles. Besides, the necessity of such a road was made more evident to public men. Appropriations were made for construction, but on all occasions the old controversy relative to the consti-tutional right of the federal government to construct roads in States and afterward to maintain them was fought over. As is usual, the advocates of the road and of the appropriation succeeded, and year by year the work went forward. Sometimes the appropriations were put into general appropriation bills. As soon as the road was built, it became necessary, so heavy was the travel, to make repairs. After having approved three bills appropriating money for the maintenance of the road, in

1822, President Monroe vetoed a fourth on the ground that Congress did not posses the power, under the Constitution, to maintain such a road. At this time there appeared to be three opinions about national roads. The first was the element which may be said to have been led by Henry Clay, who held that the federal government had unquestioned authority to build interstate highways and maintain them, and to exercise exclusive jurisdiction over them, even to the making and enforcing of laws to punish those who wantonly destroyed the roads, and to erect toll-gates and collect tolls. The second element consisted of those who denied the right of the federal government to even build a road. A third class was made up of those whose views were represented by the Monroe veto message. They conceded the right of the United States to build the roads through the States by their consent, but denied to the federal government the right to maintain them after they were built, particularly to exercise such jurisdiction as would enable the government to collect tolls and punish those who destroyed bridges. Their policy was for the government to build and then turn them over to the States through which they passed, with a guarantee to maintain them.

DEBATES IN THE SENATE. The debates on the subject, particularly in the Senate, are more dreary, if possible,

constructionists saw in the building of this road the destruction of the sovereignty of the States, while those who sus-tained the Monroe idea saw the right of the State to local self-government and to the regulation of its own affairs denied when the federal government should assume the power to collect tolls and punish those who burned bridges on the national roads. Seventy years later, however, two judges of the United States Supreme Court, belonging to the same State rights party, declared that no State could, under the interstate-commerce clause of the United States Constitution, restrain the sale of liquor in original packages in one State by the citizens of another withont the specific permission of Congress.

When the Adams administration came in, in 1825, the National read enjoyed whatever executive assistance a firm believer in the policy of internal improvements by the federal government could render it. With the advent of Jackson came the restoration of the policy of building and turning over the road to States to maintain. As theyears passed the people in the entire West were anxious for the completion of the road to the Mississippi river at St. Louis. Without such a thoroughfare they were practically shut out from the East and the national capital, and in fact from all the rest of the world, unless they were so fortunate as to live near a navigable river, upon which, in 1830, steamboats of a rude character and of dangerous possibilities began to appear. And no State was delayed more in development than indiana. It was for the most part heavily wooded, so that the settler had all he could do to make a clearing without building highways over which travel could be expeditions. The roads were simply wretched in Indiana when the State was yet new, from 1820 to 1840. Indeed, a perfect highway for all seasons is yet a stranger in most parts of Indiana, as in the greater part of the country. Speaking of the early roads of Indiana-along in 1835-Hon, W. H. English said to the writer, a few days since, that he was three days coming from Scott county, seventy-five miles, to Indianapolis, on horseback, to attend a convention, and three days returning. Now the distance can be made in three hours. The ways through the lowlands were known as corduroy roads. Corduroy would indicate the king's cord, but in the case of the road it was made by laying logs on stringers side by side, making a road as rough as the streets of a Western city, but that the roughness was regular.

No wonder that communities isolated from the world by such roads took an interest in the construction of a permanent road of stone and gravel, over which a carriage could pass, and were impatient at the tardiness of the government in pushing the great national work. Now, only here and there an old man has any recollection of the interest taken in the "National road." a phrase which now has no meaning to most people, Then, that is, from 1830 to 1835, it was one of the main topics of interest to the people of this section. It was talked about as much as was the first railroad, because it meant a way out to the world beyond, a thoroughfare over which could be brought, at less cost and no danger, the few products of the outside world which the general poverty of the people would enable them to purchase.

CONSTRUCTION IN INDIANA. The road was in process of construction through Indiana from about 1833 to 1837 or 1838. At the same time the State was engaged in quite important internal improvements, making quite a boom until the collapse of the great speculative movement in 1837. In this State, in 1836, when Van Buren was elected President, the attitude of that statesman toward the "National road" and internal improvements in general, was discussed in Indiana. As it might involve the extension of the road it was a question of no little importance to the people hereabout. Inssmuch as Indiana gave William H. Harrison, Whig, her nine electoral votes, and he received only half as many in the country as did Mr. Van Buren, it is possible that the well-known championship of internal improvements by "old Tippeca-

noe" had some influence with the people of But the possibilities of railroad transportation dawned upon the world in 1830, and became probabilities soon after 1855 in this part of the country. In May, 1838, Congress made the last appropriation for the road, and when the border of Illinois was reached the great enterprise, which had occupied so much attention and been under construction over thirty years, was abandoned. It had been overtaken by a new power-the steam railway. First and last, \$6,821,246 was expended on the National road in construction and repairs. It was a well-built road, stone being used largely for foundation, and macadam in some sections. One appropriation bill required three layers of stone. The eastern portion of the road, particularly that east of the Ohio river, was for years a great thoroughfare. Opposition stage lines carried many passengers, and eight-horse teams moved the merchandise. Scores of villages sprang up on its line, and hundreds of old-fashioned taverus flourished during the quarter of a century that it was the great thoroughfare between the East and the West. When the railroad superseded the National pike, these villages and taverns fell into decay, and doubtless the old resident, whose face is turned to the past, and whose mind is filled with the local prosperity and even the glory of stage-coach days, points them out as evidences of the desolation which came to the country with the iron track and the iron

All Three Words There. Philadelphia Record.

Mrs. H-is a young married lady and an Episcopalian. Her husband is not a member of any church, but, as all good hus-bands should, he frequently attends church with his wife. His first attempt, however, to conform to the Episcopal form of service was so mortifying that he was almost tempted to forswear church-going alto-

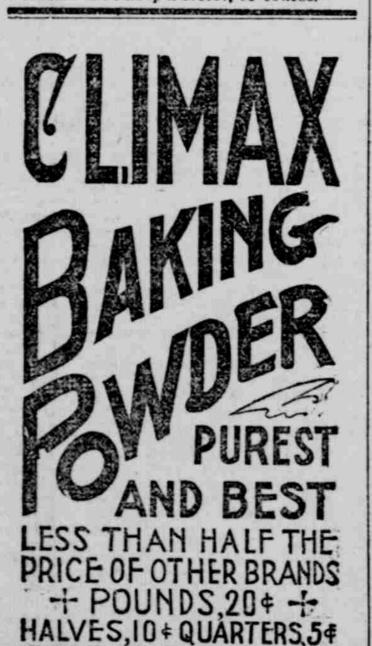
It was Easter day, and his wife had tried to coach him beforehand, naturally wishing him to take part with herin the service. "Remember now, my dear," she said, "that the rector will come forward and say, "The Lord is risen," and you will respond with, 'He is, indeed.' You will remember that, now, won't you?"
"Well, I guess I can remember three words," replied Mr. H—, a little testily.

An hour later they were at the church. The rector came foward at the proper time, in the beginning of the service, and said solemnly: "The Lord is risen."

Promptly and distinctly came the response of Mr. H-: "Is He, indeed?"

For Every Woman to Read. Boston Globe.

"Now, you must not let this go any further," said Watts to Potts, after retailing a choice bit of scandal. "Oh, certainly not," said Potts; "how did you happen to hear it?" "My wife told me. She's just like any woman-can't keep a secret, of course."



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ficed thousands of lives. By similar heedless neglect many lives are sacrificed by disease. All fatal diseases follow neglect of the first symptoms. The person has malaria, debility, is weak, nervous, tired run down. Sleepless nights and tired waking mornings follow, with bad taste in mouth, dull head, lack of vim, constipation, indigestion or kidney and liver trouble.

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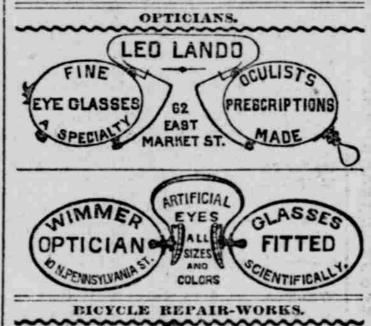


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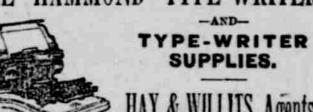
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